

Attorney General Terry Goddard

2006 Meth Fact Sheet

What is Meth?

- A cheap, powerful, highly addictive stimulant
- Side effects: psychotic and violent behavior, brain damage rotting teeth, open sores

Where does Meth come from?

- Meth labs are seized in every county and every legislative district in Arizona
- Meth is made in 2 hours by combining over-the-counter cold and allergy products containing pseudoephedrine with other retail products
- Labs are found in houses, apartments, and trailers
- Over the course of a year, the typical meth cook will teach at least ten others how to make meth
- Mobile labs cook meth in hotel rooms, parks, and our deserts



Child smeared with battery acid is rescued from a meth lab

Impact of Meth Labs on Children

- From 2000-2005 408 children were rescued from meth labs, 281 in Maricopa County alone.
- Surveys have shown 65% of Arizona child abuse & neglect cases involve meth
- 30-35 percent of meth labs seized are residences with children
- 33 percent of children found at meth labs tested positive for meth between 2000 and 2002
- Prenatal exposure to meth causes infants to be six times more likely to be born with birth defects such as spina bifida, club foot, intestinal abnormalities, and skeletal abnormalities
- Meth cooks often have guns, weapons and booby-traps to protect their drugs and labs, posing a serious safety risk for children
- Children found in meth labs often suffer from developmental delays and are likely to have been abused and/or neglected
- Children of meth users and cooks become society's responsibility and cost Arizona taxpayers millions of dollars for special services including foster care and specialized health care



Emptied blister-packs found at meth labs

Who uses Meth?

- More than 12.3 million Americans (approximately 5.2% of the population) have tried meth, and 1.5 million are regular users
- Meth cooks and meth users have been found in urban and rural areas, in rich and in poor neighborhoods

Arizona experience with the clandestine Meth lab problem: 2000-2005

- 1,412 meth production related seizures
- Disposal costs for gross contamination associated with meth labs exceeded \$4.1 million
- In 2003, 38% of males and 42% of females booked in Maricopa County jail tested positive for meth
- Arizonans spend millions of tax dollars addressing the violence and property crime committed by meth cooks and meth users



"Meth mouth" Meth use causes extensive tooth decay



Child dressed in protective clothing is escorted from the scene of a meth lab by a police officer

Risks from Meth labs

- Meth addicts turn to crime to support their habits, especially identity theft, forgery, robbery and prostitution
- Due to the flammable nature of the chemicals used in cooking meth, fires and explosions are common
- Production of meth exposes children, firefighters, law enforcement, and neighbors to toxic gases and hazardous chemicals
- 51% of injuries at meth labs happen to first responders
- The typical meth lab cooker produces 48 to 72 times a year, creating the possibility for explosive reactions each time
- Each pound of meth produced leaves behind an estimated 5-7 pounds of toxic waste

Costs & impact of Meth

- Meth is the leading drug related law enforcement problem in the country
- The rates of meth hospital admissions drastically increased from 1990-2004
 - Maricopa County 855% higher
 - Pima County 1940% higher
 - Rural Counties 2950% higher
- 70% of reporting counties say that robberies or burglaries have increased because of meth use
 - 62% report increases in domestic violence
 - 40-50% of total arrests between 2000-2005 were meth related
- Counties in southwestern states reported a 96% increase in arrests involving meth throughout the past three years
- Nearly half the responding county hospitals reported that methamphetamine is the top illicit drug involved in scenarios at their hospitals
- Exposure to meth chemicals causes chemical burns, respiratory problems, lung and tissue damage, and brain toxicity in children
- 90-95% of all mail theft and mail fraud in the greater Tucson area has a nexus to meth



Meth labs are small and easy to assemble as demonstrated in this home lab



A chemist does her work outside the meth lab while the law enforcement personnel suit up and remove dangerous chemicals from the home

Fighting Meth cooks

- Restricting meth cooks' access to pseudoephedrine reduced the number of meth lab seizures in Oklahoma by **80 percent**
- Over a dozen states passed laws similar to Oklahoma's and significantly reduced meth cooking in their states

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